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ABSTRACT

Although there has been reluctance to support direct methods of teaching moral values and character traits, due in part to lack of consensus about whose values should be taught, a national call to rethink that trend has begun to be heard. An up-to-date account is provided of the recommendations of the Oregon State Board of Education to mandate character education throughout Oregon, by December 1992, along with suggestions on policy and implementation. This publication explores the need for character education and shows how a direct approach can work in an interdependent and multicultural world. Chapter 1 attempts to define character education and discusses the need for instilling character traits. Several modern theories of moral development and their limitations are also explored in the chapter. Chapter 2 describes several ongoing character education programs and features Oregon's North Clackamas School District. Character education curriculum is the subject of chapter 3. Finally, chapter 4 deals with the legal and public policy aspects of carrying out character education in Oregon. The appendix lists seven sources of information on programs and curriculum. (54 references) (MLF)

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Preface

Debate about how teachers instill desirable character traits in school children is as old as education itself. Recently, there has been reluctance to support direct methods of teaching moral values and character traits, due in part to lack of consensus about whose values should be taught?

This Bulletin examines the national call to rethink that trend. Student understanding of traditional moral behavior is in a crisis. Confusion about what constitutes desirable character traits may be eased when students see traits modeled by teachers they respect. Perhap's this will allow tomorrow's citizenry to step back from the slippery slope of relativism.

As this Bulletin reports, current character education programs and curriculum have proven viable, especially when school districts have cultivated a close ongoing relationship with the community. It is possible to achieve consensus regarding desirable character traits in a diverse community if a school district invites input from every quarter.

The Bulletin gives an up-to-date account of the recommendations of the Oregon State Board of Education to mandate character education throughout Oregon by December 1992. It also provides district administrators and school board members with helpful suggestions on policy and implementation.

Richard Beswick received a M.Div. degree from Yale University and did his undergraduate work at the University of Oregon, focusing on Philosophy of Religion and Ethics. He is an adjunct professor of comparative religions at Northwest Christian College.

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Introduction

> I had sooner play cards against a man who was quite skeptical about ethics, but bred to believe that a gentleman does not cheat, than against an irreproachable moral philosopher who had been brought up among sharpers. In battle it is not syllogisms that will keep the reluctant nerves and muscles to their post in the third hour of the bombardment. (C. S. Lewis 1955)

Over the past two decades, the revolution in the theories of how children learn to become mature, moral adults has paralleled a decline in observable moral behavior. Many educators consider noncoercion and moral autonomy to be of great value. Some are not convinced that character training can be accomplished by the direct teaching of time-honored values such as honesty, courage, patience, respect for authority, respect for oneself, patriotism, and compassion.

The new theories evolved from a notion that good moral instincts lie inert in children and can be nurtured through sensitive moral reasoning. These theories often postulate an ultimate world view of relativism. The basic problem with holding public school curriculum to this standardless standard is expressed by Alderman and Beswick (1992):

> When we carefully consider philosophical relativism, clearly we could not live by its consequences. Whether comparing cultures or the ethical standards of individuals, relativism affords no basis for holding one another to any standard of decency. Regardless of which atrocity one might seek to oppose, the very notion of a coherent appeal to conscience would be meaningless.

In the meantime, children face an array of conditions, influences, and demands that few dreamed of before the turbulent sixties. They are expected to make decisions in a world where drugs, sexually transmitted diseases, suicide, preteen pregnancy, lack of respect for authority, violence, declining academic skills, breakdown of traditional family structures, and the insecurity of a rapidly changing social and economic future create anxiety and

confusion. How will they learn to decide between right and wrong, good and evil if character education is missing from their curriculum?

As Ernest Boyer said, "Moral Education does mean that students should be concerned not just about what will work, but about what is right. It means teaching them to ask: 'Is it good?' " (cited in Kristen Amundson 1991).

The American Association of School Administrators conducted its own national survey of teachers, principals, and administrators and found evidence of a severe decline in moral understanding and behavior among school children. Parents in the survey insisted that the public schools address the challenge by teaching character education (Amundson).

It is not that teachers have totally failed to understand the matter or to fill the moral vacuum. Most teachers are committed to teaching and modeling moral principles. However, in the wake of "values education" and "values clarification" programs, there has been a general reluctance to push traditional character traits too hard. Many educators are reluctant to impose their beliefs on a culturally and religiously diverse community. This cultural and religious sensitivity has sometimes been cited as justification for employing curricular methods that give students opportunities for moral dialogue while withholding expectations of reasonable moral behavior.

With evidence mounting that the laissez faire approach to values instruction has not worked, a call for the direct teaching of character traits has begun to be heard across the United States. Character education is rooted in traditional moral pedagogy and can be traced back to all nations and cultures, ancient and modern, religious and secular.

This Bulletin explores the need for character education and shows how a direct approach can work in an interdependent and multicultural world.

Chapter 1 attempts to define character education and discusses the need for instilling character traits. Several modern theories of moral development and their limitations are also explored in the chapter. Chapter 2 describes several ongoing character education programs and features Oregon's North Clackamas School District. Character education curriculum is the subject of chapter 3. Finally, chapter 4 deals with the legal and public policy aspects of carrying out character education in Oregon.

Chapter 1

Moral Development: Discovering Inner Values or Learning What Is Good?

Character education is founded on the proposition that upright standards of behavior and good qualities of character are desirable, objectively knowable, and able to be instilled in children. Modern theories of moral development have cast doubt on this process, claiming instead that children naturally find their way through the maze of ethical decision-making by experience and reflection. This chapter examines the current moral health of students, reviews the theories, and recommends a return to character education.

The Need for Character Education

Historically, American society believed character education to be as necessary as academic achievement. In the nineteenth century, teachers chose readers and primers for their moral content as well as their literary merit. It was understood that America's strength was as dependent on the moral choices of her citizenry as on her academic, industrial, and technological success. What changed?

Kevin Ryan (1986) thinks that there were several factors. American education, for all its triumphs of tolerance and universal schooling, is often the victim of fadism. American schools' moral consensus has been shaken since World War II by distrust of government, vast changes in the youth culture, new theories of knowledge and learning processes, and a growing rootlessness in society. Confidence in universal truths and common moral assumptions has given way to relativism and value-neutral approaches to moral education.

Vivid examples of the relativism in elementary curriculum surfaced in a study of public school textbooks by Paul Vitz (1986). For instance, many books redefine traditional family structure as "a group of people" or "the people one lives with." Although the original intention may have been to eliminate offense to single-parent families or other constellations of child-rearing, the result has been to grant nearly all groupings equal legitimacy and desirability with the traditional nuclear family.

The sanitizing of history textbooks from any substantial reference to the role of religion in public life and literature is also apparent. Relativism in the guise of multicultural sensitivity promotes the view that teaching about religion (a constitutionally correct and educationally necessary enterprise) is dangerously close to indoctrination. Ethics, morals, and values are believed to originate from an objective transcendent source by many religions and worldviews. Relativism rules out any significant study of the traditions that give character education an objective basis.

Given these reasons for the neglect of character education in public schools, it will be helpful to look at a snapshot of current student morality. A survey of 5,000 young people in grades 4-12 commissioned by the Girl Scouts of America in 1989 revealed a diverse and sometimes disheartening picture. Although children can make subtle, complex judgments about moral matters, what they say they would do in real-life situations is often at odds

Children's Responses to Hypothetical Moral Dilemmas

- Only 5 percent would take money from their parents without asking, but 36 percent would lie to protect a friend who had vandalized school property.
- Sixty-five percent of high school students would cheat on an important exam.
- Forty-six percent of junior high and high school students would refuse an alcoholic drink if offered one at a party.
- Thirty-seven percent of junior high and high school students would have sex with someone they loved if the opportunity presented itself.
- Only 12 percent of junior high and high school students would advise a pregnant friend to have an abortion; 57 percent would advise her to keep the baby or put it up for adoption. Seventy percent of the students in this age group, however, said the pregnant girl should have the final say in an abortion.
- Older children in the study were more likely to say they would cheat, drink under age, and adopt more libertarian stances in their decisions about sexuality.

Girl Scouts of America

The 'Moral Compass' or World View of the Children

Here is how the children in the Girl Scouts of America survey were grouped according to the basis for their moral decisions.

- Twenty-five percent (the largest group) were described as "civic humanists." They made their moral decisions based on the common good.
- Twenty percent were "conventionalists." They tended to do whatever the authority figure advised.
- Eighteen percent were "expressivists." They did whatever their emotions and needs called for.
- Sixteen percent were "theists." These students made their moral decisions according to their religious beliefs.
- Ten percent were "utilitarians." They based their moral decisions on their perceived self-interest.

Peter Schmidt 1990

A Definition of Values, Ethics, Morals, and Character

Values

Values are principles or ideas that groups and individuals believe in and that guide their respective behaviors. Values are of two types: procedural and substantive. Procedural values guide the rational processes, such as respect for critical inquiry and the scientific method, tolerance, and reasoned argument. Values having to do with the orderly operation of the classroom may also be categorized as procedural. Substantive values are those that have to do with moral, political, and social preferences. Some examples are honesty, respect for others' rights, equality of opportunity, and justice.

Ethics

Ethics refer to sets of moral principles or values and/or the discipline concerned with the study of moral philosophy. Moral values relate specifically to right and wrong behavior rather than a range of worthwhile principles or ideas. Problems of moral choice are generated in part by the fact that there is no single pattern of approved action in human society.... Ethical behavior is not the same as legal behavior. Actions can be legal but unethical; they can be ethical but illegal.

Morals

Morals relate to principles of right and wrong. Though many decisions we make involve a moral component, considerations of "rightness" and "wrongness" are neither the only nor the most crucial elements present. Other criteria upon which our decisions may be based include such pragmatic considerations as personal pleasure, self-preservation, and effectiveness.

Baltimore Public Schools (1991)

Character

A distinctive trait, quality, attribute, or essential quality. An individual's pattern of behavior, personality, moral constitution, moral strength, self-discipline, fortitude.

Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary

with their intellectual conclusions about moral correctness. (For details about the survey's findings, see the sidebar on page 4.)

Reflecting on the Girl Scout Survey, Robert Coles (1990), professor of child psychiatry at Harvard University, says that perhaps some children merely reflect the values of their society:

> The notion of "what works" is "what works for me." Given their membership in a highly competitive, SAT-conscious culture, some children can very easily entertain notions of cheating. They're so fiercely committed to using the schools to achieve their own ends. Sadly, as so-called "cultural literacy" grows, what could be called "moral literacy" declines.

Public schools are not always as quick to recognize and reward moral achievement as they are to celebrate academic excellence. The fact that ethics is not taught by all schools may also be a reflection of a lack of moral standards in our society. We discredit business and political leaders when immoral or unethical behavior is discovered. But if they express any sorrow at all, it is usually not over what they have done, but over the fact they were caught. Unfortunately, when good character is modeled by public officials, it does not receive the same kind of attention. Children take their cue from adults.

What Is Character Education?

Edward Wynne (1991) defines *good character* as a "regular display of good habits, e.g., kindness, diligence, obedience, and self-discipline." Aristotle referred to such habits as *virtues*. Wynne calls upon adults to understand their role as models of ethical behavior for children. If we think it is philosophically wrong for teachers to advocate certain character traits, then we go against the great traditions of all cultures and ages.

Good character emerges from a careful discipline involving teachers who both believe in an objective standard of goodness and who model virtue in their lives. Character education instills good character, which consists of qualities such as those Wynne mentioned: initiative, diligence, loyalty, tact, kindness, generosity, and courage.

Educators often differentiate between "moral education" and "character education." This distinction reflects both new scientific and psychological theories of moral development and the desire to adapt to the diversity of culture and religion in our society. Moral education has, for many, come to mean the indirect fostering of moral understanding through discussion and clarification processes. Character education, on the other hand, promotes positive character traits by direct teaching, special curriculum, and modeling by teachers and other adults.

In a session on "teaching of values," the National Association of Secondary School Principals considered the claim that direct teaching of values may lead to indoctrination, whereas indirect methods may lead to relativism (Irwin 1988). The association saw the "values-analysis" method as a possible solution. Values-analysis consists of learning by debating moral issues and dilemmas. Many current commentators on moral education similarly hope that character education programs will preserve students' moral autonomy while simultaneously helping them to internalize traditionally approved moral convictions.

Our understanding of how best to foster the moral development of children is, at present, in a transition back to the traditional view. There is confusion among educators on which of the principles of moral education to retain in character education. Some, like Douglas Heath, think that the common denominator is a morality based on compassion. The Child Development Project (see chapter 3) translates this view into a communitywide program. Lawrence Kohlberg, who defined an influential theory of moral development, also saw potential in a community devoted to compassion and justice.

Douglas Heath, educational researcher, consultant, and author, envisions a revitalization of "liberal education" as an antidote to the lack of character education in the schools (Brandt 1989). He believes that public

schools should integrate character lessons into curricula that emphasize cooperative learning. Students need to reflect upon their relations with others and thus become more "other-centered." Moral convictions based on concern and compassion for others lead to increased stability and moral autonomy for a child.

Moral autonomy may be a misleading concept when it is premised on the assumption that children should be free to "discover" their innate and unique set of values. Character education assumes that good thinking and behavior need to be taught, modeled, and repeated throughout the child's formal education. Moral autonomy in this sense is choosing for oneself that which is right.

The self-discovery and natural developmental approach suggested by Piaget and Kohlberg gave rise to the values-clarification model of moral education. According to many educators, public education's twenty-year experiment with values clarification is nearly over. In its most extreme form, values clarification suggests that each child can arrive at her own set of values by looking within. The teacher is not to judge any child's beliefs as right or wrong. Because beliefs are "clarified," it is hoped the student will become morally mature. Instead, the values clarification process all too often legitimizes tendencies toward selfishness and antisocial behavior. It seems that the road forward to genuine character development leads back to character education.

Theories of Moral Development

Lawrence Kohlberg observed how children talked about moral decisions at different ages and discovered a pattern of development that predicted how motives and social awareness influenced moral behavior. Without departing from his essentially humanistic presuppositions, Kohlberg did become disillusioned with the results of moral education and sought to create a "Just Community" that would enliven the moral climate of children.

Communitarians like Amitai Etzioni would reintroduce the direct teaching of time-honored character traits within the structure of the intentional community. In an effort to preserve moral autonomy, some educators urge a synthesis between values clarification and character education. However the balance is struck, the tide seems to be moving in the direction of teaching those behaviors believed to be good by a consensus of the society.

Lawrence Kohlberg's Six Stages of Moral Development

Lawrence Kohlberg constructed a highly influential theory of moral development by observing groups of children interact in structured situations. His six stages of moral development are conceived to be the natural cognitive advancements of awareness through which children progress as they mature. Each stage focuses on new motivations for personal goals, social interactions, and moral principles.

The stages account for much that we observe in children's behavior, but Kohlberg's construction does not adequately answer basic philosophical and religious issues, like the meaning of life or the existence of an absolute transcendent reality. Transcendent absolutes are accorded symbolic significance at level four. Kohlberg hoped that a hypothetical seventh level would tie up the loose metaphysical ends in his humanistic superstructure. He was at work on level seven at his death.

Following is a brief description of Kohlberg's six stages of moral development, condensed from Clark Power (1989):

1. *Preconventional—heteronomous morality.* At this stage, the child does not consider the interests or rights of others. Neither can she see things from more than one perspective, often confusing the perspective of an authority with her own. The constituted authority keeps order by defining rules, insisting on obedience, and exacting punishment.

2. *Preconventional—individualistic morality.* Children experience a growing awareness that others have interests that might conflict with their own. Right is relative. A child seeks his own interest in a competitive context. Ethics are worked out by what is fair, often with the force of a contract or an assumption of equal exchange.

3. *Conventional—mutual interpersonal expectations and conformity.* The child becomes aware that self-interest dovetails with a shared group interest. Shared feelings and expectations sometime take precedence over individual interest. The Golden Rule dictates moral decisions. Fulfilling other people's expectations, such as being a good brother, son, or pupil, becomes an important goal. Trust, loyalty, respect, and gratitude are valued.

4. *Conventional—social system and conscience.* A student begins to understand differing social contracts in the same way he understood the relation between self-interest and group interest. There is, consequently, a tendency to accept one's role in the system and adapt to the perspective of the social contract. Since the institution becomes paramount, imperatives of conscience dictate ethical decisions. The student might ask himself, "What if everybody did this?" Keeping agreements and valuing fixed social responsibilities become important ethical norms.

5. *Postconventional or Principled—social contract and individual rights.* This is the "prior to society" perspective. A child has become aware

of natural rights or laws that apply by virtue of the value of human existence. Simultaneously, the child becomes aware of many world views that speak to this fundamental basis of morality. Although the rules of the social contract begin to look relative and sometimes arbitrary, some absolute values like life and liberty are understood to transcend social contracts and culture. Ethics are approached through utilitarian ideas—"the greatest good for the greatest number."

6. *Postconventional or Principled—universal ethical principles.* Social arrangements and governance are viewed from a moral base that defines persons as ends in themselves. The belief that there is a set of universal moral principles may be viewed as both rational and certain. Values and character traits are willingly chosen and internalized because they rest on rationality and universality. Ethical principles, for Kohlberg, are represented by such traits as justice, equality, and human rights. He struggled to find an adequate philosophical or metaphysical basis for his idea of universal ethical principles.

An Assessment

A critic of Kohlberg, Donald M. Joy (1983), says he commits the naturalistic fallacy. Any time it is argued that "what is" is "what ought to be," the data have to be carefully selected to represent values and universals that comprise a fairly general consensus of the society, Joy contends. In other words, Kohlberg relies on our willingness to accept that people generally develop in a morally progressive direction. But this is not always so.

People also devolve into moral chaos. On what basis do we disapprove or label moral degeneration wrong? We cannot, according to Kohlberg's worldview.

On the other hand, Kohlberg has been instrumental in pinpointing the idea of justice as the core of morality. Neither supernaturalist nor humanist would want to disagree. The Golden Rule can be deduced by naturalistic logic or accepted as theological revelation. Justice was such an important factor in Kohlberg's understanding of moral development that, unlike Piaget who was content to remain a theoretician, he experimented with democratic and socialistic teacher-student relationships in order to find a way to transform schools into just communities.

From Moral Understanding to Moral Community

Kohlberg's student and protege, Moshe Blatt, introduced children to a level of moral development one stage beyond that which they had attained by creating mixed groups of students with different levels of moral awareness.

He discovered that although the rate of moral understanding could be accelerated in this way, advances in actual moral development—everyday discipline and decision-making in moral dilemmas—were minimal.

Kohlberg began to lose confidence in the idea of natural and free development of the child's moral nature. After observing the failure of relying solely on dialogue to develop character in children, Kohlberg developed the "Just Community" approach. The Just Community upheld an open moral agenda of justice and common ownership of successes and failures. Community projects and group rights took precedence over competition and individual rights.

Although this process fostered the active moral context Kohlberg was looking for, he found that the intense social pressure left many students overcommitted to the collective identity. Moral principles pertained exclusively to the group process. Unity developed at the expense of individual rights. Little appreciation or provision was made for the individual agenda.

In the last phase of his career, Kohlberg translated his findings into the Just Community approach of the Cluster School.

The communitarian or Just Community approach attempts to blend democratic values with individual autonomy. At first, democratic principles appropriate to student relationships applied almost equally to the relationship between student and teacher. A balance finally had to be struck between the teacher-as-moral-authority and the teacher-as-partner during moral discovery. Showing what constituted good moral values, traits, and decisions flowed from teacher to students.

The concept of communitarianism has received further refining by George Washington University professor and author Amitai Etzioni.

Etzioni calls for a reformation of moral training beginning with the family, the school, and then the community. He advocates teaching children to take responsibility for the social common good through a process of unlearning the current emphasis on hyperindividualism. Communitarianism would involve reincorporating a high regard for the ideal of the two-parent family and stressing values Americans share, such as "human dignity, tolerance, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and merits of democratic government, truth, work and self-reliance" (Deborah L. Cohen 1991).

Like Kohlberg, Etzioni seeks a model that, while avoiding an oppressive teacher domination of the student, recognizes that teachers are rightfully in a position to impart universal moral principles. Unlike Kohlberg, Etzioni is not convinced that students develop in a natural moral progression without direct teaching of moral absolutes. Such teaching sometimes creates tension.

> To state the obvious, that the first duty of schools is education, turns out not to be self-evident. First, there is a strong tendency to equate education with transmitting skills and knowledge, which it is not; at

> least that is not the school's only major task. Second, there is a lack of understanding of how important character formation, education's core subject, is in itself for the purposes for which teaching is usually sought—as a source of basic skills for work, for mutuality, for membership in a civil community, and for effective teaching. (Amitai Etzioni 1983)

Values Clarification

One offshoot of Kohlberg's theories that had far-ranging results was the values clarification movement. A book of the same name, written by Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum (1972), offered teachers and students hypothetical stories that posed decision-making dilemmas. In one story, food is running short in a crowded life boat. The passengers are described in great detail: age, attitude, social status, and so forth. The students must choose which passengers are to survive. They need not justify their reasons, nor is the teacher called upon to evaluate the appropriateness of students' choices.

According to Ivor Pritchard (1988a), after twenty years of research designed to measure the effects of this approach, values clarification does not appear to have any effect at all. In fact, many educators believe values clarification contributed to the general moral decline among students during the same period. Still, some administrators like principal Allan S. Vann (1988) call for another look at the clarification theory. Vann thinks that it is impossible for teachers to teach honesty, work ethic, or citizenship rights without running headlong into the problem of whose values should be stressed.

Vann calls for a synthesis between teaching moral imperatives and clarifying values. He claims that the old style of moral education that attempted to instill desirable character traits never worked. Children rarely accepted it and often ended up in rebellion. A combination of presenting good values and inviting students to evaluate and test their views would be more likely to internalize morality, Vann maintains.

Jacques Benninga (1988) also believes there is room for moral debate while teaching character traits. Like Vann, Benninga contends that if a student feels ownership in the educational process, the result will be a moral human being. However, Benninga does not advocate a return to original values clarification techniques. He contends that students need to discuss issues that affect them directly. Such discussions develop critical thinking and commitment to reasoned dialogue, which are a part of moral maturity. In a society based on high moral values, the direct and indirect methods of teaching of those values are not—and should not be—incompatible (Benninga).

Character Education—The Direct Approach

This Bulletin focuses primarily on direct teaching of positive character traits. Proponents of teaching ethical imperatives by means of carefully designed programs and proven curriculum point out that character education affects the mind, conscience, and heart in a positive and self-enhancing way. Advocates of the direct approach claim that when adults communicate to children their values and teach children how to go about making good decisions, cognitive skills and creative abilities are also stimulated.

The problem of whose values will be taught does not seem to be as insurmountable as initially thought. Character education teaches that good character traits have an objective basis. Values such as honesty, courage, compassion, respect for authority, respect for self and others, dignity of the individual, and the work ethic are universal in their appeal.

Sockett and Alston (1989) describe the most fertile soil for the teaching of character as one in which friendship is strongly encouraged. When a child equates moral decision-making with the passion of loving a friend, courage in moral situations becomes a way to maintain a relationship. This appealing motivation suggests a need for the child's first school of character to be the home. It is in a loving family that character development can be experienced as joyous learning.

Unfortunately, this is an era of family dysfunction. It is also a time when the moral potential of children is threatened by drugs, gangs, suicide, violence, influences in the media, and endless distractions. To help overcome these threats, more educators, psychologists, and community leaders are strongly recommending character education programs.

Chapter 2

Character Education Programs

Character education programs are based on the principle that conduct reflects character. That behavior, not rhetoric, should be the litmus test for good character is an old and proven idea. The Greek word for *character* means "to mark" and implies that moral development is demonstrated by moral action. A person is marked by his activities and behavior. Edward Wynne (1988) said, "It is easy to decide whether pupils are displaying or learning good character. We can see and hear them being polite, telling the truth, observing the rules, practicing diligence, keeping the school building and grounds clean, and being helpful to other children and adults."

A basic opposition of philosophies exists between those who advocate activity-based, directive character education programs and those who support programs that focus on students' level of moral reasoning. Programs in the latter group, which employ a cognitive developmental approach, are based on the assumption that compulsion does not help a child to internalize moral values.

An example of the direct approach is the For Character program introduced into the Chicago area by Edward Wynne. For Character makes recommendations to support directive, proactive theory and to plan and develop partnerships with the community. The program identifies and rewards public and private schools that show a high level of character training and academic effort and it also gives special awards for community service and innovative character education curriculum.

Wynne notes that teachers and administrators in public schools recognized by the For Character program see nothing problematic about teaching traditional values to students in public schools. Children who observe and practice truthfulness, obedience to legitimate authorities, kindness, diligence, and loyalty are not necessarily being religious. Character values are not the sole province of religion. Virtue is the foundation of any healthy society no matter what world view is embraced.

This chapter examines several programs that take a direct approach to character education. Each program fosters good conduct, develops sound cognitive understanding of moral thought, and helps children to internalize sound character traits.

North Clackamas School District

With over 12,000 students, the North Clackamas School District, located in Milwaukie, Oregon, is the fifth largest district in the state. The district is comprised of three high schools, four junior high schools, and seventeen elementary schools. North Clackamas established a character education program in fall 1988, after considerable consultation with individuals and groups representing a cross-section of the community.

The idea for a character education program was introduced by school board member Larry Johnson after he attended a National School Boards Association meeting. Johnson liked what he heard in the Baltimore County Public Schools' task force report on values education and ethical behavior. The Baltimore task force published a handbook entitled *How to Establish a Values Education Program in Your School.* Details of that report appear in chapter 4.

Ben Schellenberg, North Clackamas's superintendent, invited groups like the business association, sheriff's department, ministerial association, social service clubs, and parents who teach their children at home to suggest desirable character traits that could be fostered in grades K-12. From the original list of forty-eight traits, the following thirteen were decided upon as being reflective of the moral values of the North Clackamas community:

- Patriotism
- Integrity and Honesty
- Courtesy
- Respect for Authority
- Courage
- Self-esteem
- Compassion
- Self Discipline and Responsibility
- Work Ethic
- Appreciation for Education
- Patience
- Respect for Others and Property
- Cooperation

All thirteen traits are taught over a four-year period, with three or four getting the attention each year.

Rationale for the Program

Prior to implementing the first cycle of the character education program in 1988, the administration and school board heard testimony not only

from the community but from elementary and secondary school teachers. The school board commissioned the necessary research and passed a resolution to implement character education that read:

> Whereas North Clackamas School District 12 teaches, promotes, and encourages good citizenship for all students and staff; and Whereas teaching traditional American ethical values will enhance good citizenship; and Whereas presently a formal curriculum on Character Education is not in place; now
>
> Therefore Be It Resolved that Character Education is a desirable goal; and Therefore, the staff is directed to promptly draft an implementation plan for Board approval which will include successful ideas of other school districts and input from our community.

In November 1989, the Instructional Development Department of North Clackamas drafted a basic rationale that appears both in promotional brochures and as an introduction to each of the four program booklets. The following excerpt includes the salient points:

> *Rationale for Character Education in North Clackamas School District*
>
> For several years much public concern has been expressed regarding a decline in the character and ethical behavior in this nation's children. Indications of a troubled youth are all too familiar: school dropouts, drug abuse, pregnancy, crime, gangs and suicide. Whatever the complex causes (the influence of mass media, changes in family structure, social pressures or low self-esteem) many children do not have adequate character development either for a successful educational experience or for a productive role in society.
>
> Because identifying the cause is complex, identifying the solution will not be simple. However, answers do lie within the combined efforts

Definitions of the Thirteen Character Traits

Patriotism is knowing about and showing pride in one's country through responsible citizenship.

Integrity is being true to one's moral and ethical beliefs.

Honesty is earning or accomplishing something in a fair manner.

Courtesy is being polite, kind, civil, and thoughtful of others.

Respect for authority is showing appropriate consideration, regard, and honor to someone because of a special position.

Self-esteem is self-worth, self-respect, self-confidence and an ability to like and believe in oneself.

Compassion is showing sympathetic attitudes and acts of kindness toward others.

Self-discipline is knowing one's responsibilities and carrying them through faithfully without supervision.

Work ethic is a set of beliefs which develop productive work skills and attitudes.

Appreciation of education is valuing learning as a means to understand the past, the present, and to prepare for the future.

Patience is a calm endurance of a trying or difficult situation, as well as an understanding of the beliefs or conditions of others.

Courage is upholding what one believes to be right or just.

Cooperation is the ability to work with others for a common purpose.

North Clackamas School District 1988

> of the entire community—family, church, business, community groups and the school. Therefore, one of the tasks of the Character Education Program will be to foster on-going community support, education and involvement.
>
> Historically, schools have had as a central purpose the task of instilling virtue and proper conduct, as well as instructing students in academic fields. Current evidence of such efforts exists in the District guidelines for Student Behavior, the District Guidance and Counselling Programs, teachers' lists of student classroom behavior expectations and curriculum content in such courses as literature, social studies and health.
>
> The Character Education Program will provide an assertive and organized approach to improve student development by promoting the character traits. Although student character development will be difficult to measure statistically, several changes should be observable. Students will have a raised awareness and understanding of the 13 character traits. Students will experience a school and community which stresses the importance of character development. They will see positive role models in their community and in school curricula. Behavioral skills which reflect these character qualities will be reinforced. Hopefully, these observable changes will, in time, reflect an inherent development of each child's character.

Consensus on Moral Traits

When asked whether the district had spent any time discussing theories of moral development or models of intentional moral communities, Terri Pavlonnis, director of curriculum, said that such discussions were not a major factor since the community was very clear on what constituted good moral behavior and suitable character. Traits like honesty, respect, and the work ethic do not need much justification. They are objectively good in a self-evident way. Few would seriously argue against them.

Pavlonnis said some teachers initially felt that moral and ethical matters were adequately covered through teachers' interactions with students, appropriate discipline, and moral lessons imbedded in the curriculum. Now, however, teachers strongly support the program. Pavlonnis attributes this support to two factors.

> It gives them permission to talk about things that they were not sure they could talk about because of the uproar about "values education" that had made them feel gun-shy about imposing their own values on students. And they can make the most of "teachable moments" by, for instance, stopping in the middle of a math lesson to not only stop a fight and restore order, but give instruction on "how we treat one another."

Moreover, teachers no longer feel guilty when they use "academic time" to address students' need to treat one another with courtesy, take responsibility for their course work, or the like, because the district has officially made character development a high priority.

Flexibility within the Program

When using a direct approach to moral education like that at North Clackamas, educators must permit moral discussion and dissent among students, particularly in the higher grades. Consider the virtue of patriotism, for example. Although nearly everyone agrees that loyalty and service to one's country is important, not everyone shares the same idea about what constitutes loyalty and service.

Pavlonnis pointed to the 1991 Gulf War as a case in point. Students' feelings about the war became a "teachable moment" through which the faculty encouraged students to engage in rational dialogue. Throughout North Clackamas School District, assemblies were held to express both support and dissent. Not one walkout occurred in the school district during the months of war. It is apparent that the character education program does not teach blind patriotism. Any conscientious position that is legal can be construed as patriotic. Contributions like relief work, education at home or abroad, and nonmilitary government work are deemed as being of high value.

Self-esteem is an elusive character trait that is difficult to teach. Controversy continues over how it affects or is affected by academic achievement. Acknowledging that self-esteem and achievement have a bit of a chicken-and-egg relationship, Pavlonnis nonetheless believes that physical and mental health and an emphasis on achievement are the essential building blocks of self-esteem.

When asked if the district had considered Quest or other curricula that incorporate guided imagery and meditation to "empower" children, Pavlonnis responded,

> No, the community would not have them. They teach kids how to make decisions but not that there are right and wrong decisions. We teach decision making but we teach hand in hand what a good decision is and what a bad decision is. It continues to be a little of a sore point among staff, but we can reach the same goal without using the controversial programs.

Pavlonnis believes the sensitivity demonstrated by North Clackamas's superintendent has played a major role in the success of the program. By constantly staying in touch with the community through formal functions and informal "coffees," Schellenberg helps all groups to feel that their interests and values are important and need to be reflected in the district's policies.

The superintendent and his staff also solicit the recommendations of home-school parents for whom the district offers curricular help.

Partnership with the Community

Schellenberg underscores the need for educators to enter into partnerships with the community. His involvement with the total community gives him a realistic view of the kind of future workers businesses are looking for and the kind of supplementary services home-schooling parents would welcome from the district. He meets regularly with business people, law enforcement officials, attorneys, and members of the clergy, and he speaks at local churches.

When asked to assess the results of the first four years of the character education program, Schellenberg said they were somewhat difficult to evaluate. However, he believed there have been noticeable changes in student attitudes and less vandalism. In the junior high schools, Schellenberg has observed exemplary behavior, good attitudes, and students cheerfully on task in the classroom.

He spoke very highly about teachers adopting a "teachable moments" approach to handle controversy and crisis among students. "Take, for example, a fight at recess among sixth graders in which the teacher intervenes and instructs the students on how to resolve conflicts peacefully. This is valuable because it is so very practical. It is character training in a real situation."

Whereas some school districts might only solicit community feedback on character traits from site-based committees consisting of teachers and parents, North Clackamas has taken a more expansive route, reaching out to all community groups. Schellenberg said that although North Clackamas utilizes site-based teams, he believes programs like character education call for a wider public airing of ideas from a broader audience.

Not only did the community play an important part in defining character education, its continuing support is also evident. Identical posters promoting honesty or respect for racial diversity hang in the halls of the schools and local businesses and churches. One poster focusing on responsible decision-making gives a child several points to ponder as she contemplates a course of action: Is this healthy? Will it hurt me or others? What would my parents think?

Sample Lesson Content

North Clackamas is still at work creating a comprehensive character education curriculum. In the meantime, four booklets published by the

Instructional Development Department offer sample lesson content for one-year cycles. Each lesson includes ideas for how to emphasize character traits in the classroom and for buildingwide events. Lessons also offer examples of discussion topics during "teachable moment" opportunities.

To get an idea of what these lessons are like, consider the content developed for the trait "respect for authority," which is defined as "showing appropriate consideration, regard and honor to someone because of a special position, for example, police officer, judge, school official, and parent." Buildingwide events involve each grade level in creating special awards for those who show appropriate respect for authority or who act responsibly in positions of authority. Poster and writing contests are held on the target trait. Specialists in media material and technology prepare resource lists for student research. Faculty/student committees invite community leaders like policemen, lawyers, businessmen, and judges to address classrooms and assemblies. Rules regarding how students are to conduct themselves in relation to school authorities are reviewed and updated. And authority positions for students are examined or created to provide experience with leadership and service.

In the classroom, discussion and projects on respect for authority are handled in much the same way as traditional academic subjects. Possible discussions include who has authority over the nation, community, and one's body; how individuals are held accountable for breaking the rules; whether respect should be shown to a position or a person; and how authority is delegated. Projects and research might involve playing roles such as judge and juror; examining justice within differing forms of government (for example, democracy, dictatorship, and slave-states); and researching famous people who struggled with authority, such as presidents, civil rights leaders, and scientists. Eventually a discussion of the necessity of discipline and authority for every sphere of life can be looked at in terms of working systems and holistic world views.

New Jersey Advisory Council Lists Core Values

The *Report of the Advisory Council on Developing Character and Values in New Jersey Students* (1989) suggests the following core values and corollaries:

- *Civic Responsibility* based on acknowledgement of authority, global awareness, justice, fairness, patriotism, and property rights.
- *Respect For the Natural Environment* based on care and conservation of the earth and environmental education.
- *Respect For Others* based on compassion and service, courtesy and cooperativeness, honesty, loyalty, moderation, recognition and understanding of various religious traditions, regard for human life, and tolerance.
- *Respect For Oneself* based on accountability, courage, diligence, commitment, reliability, thrift, knowledge and learning, moral courage, and self-esteem.

To earn the respect of students, teachers need to exercise their authority appropriately by applying consequences fairly when there are infractions of established rules. When infractions arise, the rules governing disagreement with authorities need to be clear. Sometimes situations come up when the authority figure is not present. Having procedures for who assumes leadership and establishing chains of command fosters student confidence in the midst of crisis situations.

Like respect for authority, the twelve other character traits are accorded similar emphasis and detailed supplemental ideas. When more comprehensive curricular units are ready, they will be integrated with the projects, research, awards, and speakers that are now affecting character development at North Clackamas in such a positive way.

Pavlonnis, who serves on the Oregon Department of Education Character Advisory Committee, emphasizes that each community must determine which character traits best reflect the moral consensus of the district. She strongly advises other school districts to follow the same approach that North Clackamas has in maintaining partnership with the community.

The Child Development Project of San Ramon, California

The Child Development Project (CDP), which began in 1982 in San Ramon, California, includes a character education program predicated on humane, democratic, prosocial, and cooperative learning values. Unlike the program in North Clackamas School District, the goals and character traits were defined by the creators of the program and not by community consensus. Nevertheless, the program still received broad-based community support (National School Boards Association 1987).

CDP emphasizes group learning strategies, empathetic social awareness, and democratic structures between teachers and students. Sympathy and empathy are the most highly regarded character traits of the Child Development Project. Human compassion is one trait that does not create a conflict between individual goals and rights and community values.

Five types of activities, described below, are incorporated into the program:

Cooperative Activities

These include academic and recreational pursuits that show the value both of individual achievement and competition, on one hand, and cooperative skills and appreciation of meeting group goals, on the other. One positive academic development noticed by program evaluators is that through

cooperative learning children acquire new learning strategies from other children.

Helping and Sharing Activities

Children help with chores that contribute to the classroom, the school, the community, and the home. The assignments rely on community organizations and parents to work cooperatively with the children. Charity and social responsibility are viewed as a natural and expected part of everyday life. The program has received enthusiastic support from parents who like the fact that service and cooperation extend to the home through projects designed for the family.

Setting Positive Examples

A well-developed curriculum of literature, films, drama, and television provides moral examples that illustrate the core values of our society. Although the CDP relies on methods that allow values to become internalized through process and exposure, they are nonetheless taught to be objectively true. Stories illustrate powerful lessons in honesty, courage, unselfishness, and loyalty. For example, a collection of Tolstoy's short stories for children provided several fertile themes. Fourth graders worked in small groups to write endings to a story entitled "The King and the Humble Hut." They didn't all come up with Tolstoy's solution to the dilemma of a powerful king whose view is being spoiled by a peasant's humble home, but most probably took away Tolstoy's message that showing respect for others shows respect for oneself (National School Boards Association).

Promoting Social Understanding

Spontaneous events, crises, and moral dilemmas in the classroom provide teachers with opportunities to help children understand one another's thinking and feelings. Morally suspicious motives are sorted out from differences in perception, background, and culture. Sometimes regular classroom events are staged to create a situation that can be used to foster this development of understanding. This approach is similar to North Clackamas's concept of "teachable moments."

Positive Discipline

Since rules of behavior are defined as much as possible with the consent of both students and teachers, discipline does not rely heavily on traditional rewards and punishments. Classroom management is a process of

Baltimore County Public Schools Recommend Character Traits

The Baltimore County Public Schools of Towson, Maryland, published a handbook for school administrators entitled *1984 and Beyond: A Reaffirmation of Values*. The handbook deals with the establishment of a character education program in the public schools. *1984 and Beyond* suggests that parents periodically be invited to observe the character education process and that the media (newspapers and television) be invited to preview the program and document its stages of formation. The task force recommended the following values based on the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights:

Compassion	Objectivity
Courtesy	Order
Critical Inquiry	Patriotism
Due Process	Rational Consent
Equality of Opportunity	Reasoned Argument
Respect for Others' Rights	Freedom of Thought and Action
Honesty	Responsibility
Rule of Law	Responsibile Citizenship
Integrity	Tolerance
Knowledge	Truth
Loyalty	Human Worth and Dignity
Justice	

One of the character objectives the commission formulated was "A recognition of the right of others to hold and express differing views, combined with the capacity to make discriminating judgments among competing opinions" (Amundson 1991). This definition allows for tolerance while debunking the notion that every perspective has equal validity.

mutual problem solving. Eric Schaps and William Streshly (1988), co-founders of CDP, call this approach "developmental discipline." The goal is that the child not only learns to avoid punishment but develops self-control and internalizes the principles of problem-solving. Evaluators discovered that children who participate in the program are more likely to pay attention to the needs and perspectives of others when in a conflict and propose realistic and adequate solutions (Schaps, Solomon, and Watson 1986).

According to Alfie Kohn (1991, "Prosocial values come from a synthesis of adult inculcation and peer interaction, and these values—in contrast to the programs developed by some theorists in the area of moral reasoning—emphasize caring for others as well as applying the principles of fairness." Researchers like Kohn are calling for a synthesis between the kind of moral education that helps students discover their own values and the direct teaching of moral imperatives and moral modeling. The Child Development Project seems to be trying to weave these two strands into a comprehensive program.

'Duties to the Community' Program

The Atlanta public school system has implemented the Duties to the Community program, which focuses on three basic goals while involving students in community service projects. The goals are improved achievement in basic skills, preparation for gainful employment, and good citizenship.

The Duties to the Community program, which has been widely adopted throughout the United States, creates volunteer service opportunities for students in hospitals, churches, child care centers, and other "character building" organizations. Students are encouraged to tackle problem-solving projects along with service-oriented tasks. The Atlanta program has strengthened the partnership among students, parents, school staff, and community agencies.

Students are assigned to a public service agency and receive school credit for their work. Of course, community service is not a new idea. However, one thing that sets this program apart from others is the fact that participation is not optional, but mandatory, which intensifies interest on the part of both the school district and the community.

Community service programs such as Duties to the Community can have many benefits for participants. They can foster character development for participants by:

- Strengthening motivation for learning
- Encouraging learning by inquiry and discovery
- Becoming a bridge between the work of the school and the broader work outside
- Extending the range of learning experiences
- Building respect for people and for excellence wherever it may be found

(NSBA 1987)

One of the character objectives the commission formulated was "A recognition of the right of others to hold and express differing views, combined with the capacity to make discriminating judgements among competing opinions" (AASA 1992). This definition allows for tolerance while debunking the notion that every perspective has equal validity.

The Ontario Moral/Values Education Association

The Ontario Moral/Values Education Association (OM/VEA) helps schools in Ontario, Canada, articulate a manageable framework that includes four interrelated bases and twenty values to be stressed when incorporating character education into the curriculum. The four bases are (1) a positive sense of self, (2) respect and caring for others, (3) concern for the environment, and (4) social vision compatible with a democratic community. The twenty values are as follows:

- Compassion
- Cooperation
- Courage
- Courtesy
- Freedom
- Generosity
- Honesty
- Justice
- Loyalty
- Moderation
- Patience
- Peace
- Responsibility
- Respect for the environment
- Respect for self
- Respect for life
- Respect for others
- Self-discipline
- Sensitivity
- Tolerance

Although the language of the Ontario Moral/Values Education Association statement borrows heavily from Kohlberg's earlier work on moral development, the association does not advocate a values-neutral position.

It is simply not possible for schools to be value-free, the association claims, since values are an integral part of everything that happens in schools. There is now an urgent need for youth to develop positive values. Basic to these positive values is a belief, shared across our multi-cultural society, in the sacredness of all persons (OM/VEA 1990).

Conclusion

The direct approach to teaching character in public schools is clearly enjoying increasing support and enthusiasm both in Oregon and around the country. Character education curriculum relies on a return to the traditional values that are embodied in such concepts as the sacredness of the individual, stewardship of the environment, civic responsibility, and respect for others. We examine some character education curricula in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Character Education Curriculum

Character education curricula, like character education programs, must have the support of the community. Traditional American character training was often achieved indirectly through moral lessons contained in readers and primers. Religious training and religious studies have also offered contexts for moral understanding. However, their acceptance in the public schools has waned because of concern about potential indoctrination. This has had the unfortunate result of ignoring the vital and pervasive part religion has played in history. This chapter looks at the moral themes in literature used in traditional American schools, examines some curricula used in character education programs, and makes the case that religious studies programs such as the Williamsburg Charter Foundation's "Living with Our Deepest Differences" can be constitutionally appropriate and pedagogically sound.

Traditional Curriculum and the Power of Moral Literature

If we look at the history of education in the U.S., we can see that there used to be a greater emphasis on values and moral lessons in the literature that students were exposed to at school. According to Thomas Lickona (1988a),

> Schools in the early days of the republic tackled moral education head-on. Through discipline, the teacher's good example, and the curriculum, the school set out to develop character as well as intellect, decency as well as literacy. When children practiced their reading, for example, they typically studied tales of honesty, hard work, kindness, and courage from *The McGuffey Reader*. Gradually, however, large

> numbers of people began to lose sight of common values and to think of morality as a matter of private preference or choice. If somebody suggested that schools should teach values, the immediate retort was, "Whose values?" In this climate, public schools lost their nerve and retreated from their time-honored role as moral educators.

In the present climate of multiculturalism, literature often gets screened for racial, religious, and cultural bias. This is a necessary and valid process up to a point. However, at times there seems to be an underlying world view of relativism that is the hidden agenda of multicultural education. When this agenda calls for a values-neutral ideology, most traditional American storytelling is rejected in favor of literature deemed "politically correct." The current generation of students is often deprived of exposure to textbooks that set forth time-honored values. For example, consider how this passage from a turn-of-the-century reader differs from contemporary textbooks:

> King Charles: A fine thing, this moral sense no doubt; but I fear you will not find much of it among the Indians of North America.
>
> William Penn: And why not among them as well as others?
>
> K.C.: Because if they had possessed any, they would not have treated my subjects so barbarously as they have done.
>
> W.P.: That is no proof of the contrary, friend Charles. Thy subjects were the aggressors. When thy subjects first went to North America, they found these poor people the fondest and kindest creatures in the world. Every day they would watch for them to come ashore, and hasten to meet them, and feast them on the best fish, and venison, and corn, which were all they had. In return for this hospitality of the savages, as we call them, thy subjects, termed Christians, seized on their country and rich hunting grounds for farms for themselves. Now, is it to be wondered at, that these much-injured people should have been driven to desperation by such injustice; and that, burning with revenge, they should have committed some excesses?
>
> K.C.: Well, then, I hope you will not complain when they come to treat you in the same manner.
>
> W.P.: I am not afraid of it. As I said, I depend upon the working of their own hearts; on their notions of justice, on their moral sense. Besides, I do not mean to drive these people away from their hunting grounds. I mean to buy some of their lands of them. (Lickona 1988a)

The moral lessons taught in *McGuffey* apply to our modern times. William Penn, a Christian, is critical of injustice toward the Indians. He inveighs against inhumane treatment carried out in the context of a poorly informed religious conviction. Penn repudiates ill-treatment while implying

that Christianity, rightly understood, should lead to fair dealings with the Indians. Likewise, he credits the Native Americans with a highly developed morality and exemplary hospitality. By retaining such stories, we preserve the best ethical sensibilities of the American tradition and offer students the freedom to view their country's history critically.

The next example is taken from *The Franklin Sixth Reader and Speaker*, written by George S. Hillard and published in 1874. The story is all the more memorable because the language and context are antiquated and picturesque.

> I admit that genius and learning are sometimes found in combination with gross vices, and not unfrequently with contemptible weaknesses; and that a community at once cultivated and corrupt is no impossible monster. But it is no overstatement to say, that, other things being equal, the man who has the greatest amount of intellectual resources is in the least danger from inferior temptations,—if for no other reason, because he has fewer idle moments. The ruin of most men dates from some vacant hour. Occupation is the armor of the soul; and the train of Idleness is borne up by all the vices. I remember a satirical poem, in which the Devil is represented as fishing for men, and adapting his bait to the taste and temperament of his prey; but the idler, he said, pleased him most, because he bit the naked hook.

One might question whether cultivated temptations may, in fact, be more dangerous to the industrious and learned than sloth is to the lazy. It would make a good discussion question for students. The power of the imagination illuminates character training by philosophy, humor, and anecdote. Such Americana has always had a spellbinding and transforming effect on children and adults.

Albert Camus, in his existential classic *The Plague*, has his heroes, Dr. Rieux and Jean Tarrou, discover their own definitions of moral courage in the context of a seemingly absurd universe turned even grimmer by the ravages of bubonic plague. The values they arrive at (courage, service to others, honesty, and so forth) can be applauded by anyone who regards good character traits a must for the preservation of American society and culture.

Robert Coles, Harvard professor of educational psychology, has long advocated storytelling as central to character development. William Bennett, former U.S. Secretary of Education, also urges instilling moral basics through storytelling and allowing students to follow the moral modeling of teachers. Bennett (1988) said, "Do we want our young people to know what honesty is? Then we might teach them about Abe Lincoln walking three miles to return six cents, and, conversely, about Aesop's shepherd boy who cried wolf."

Harvard University professor Irving Babbitt believes that education is *primarily* the cultivation of wisdom and virtue. He advocates an education in

the humanities and classics. Babbitt said, "The first step (a student) has to take in the path of culture is to realize that movement is not necessarily progress" (Bennett). This statement conveys the idea that expansion of knowledge and technology does not ensure wisdom or good character and that moral literature and its lessons are timeless.

Character Education Institute

Founded in 1942 by San Antonio businessman Russell C. Hill, the Character Education Institute has developed a character education curriculum for grades K-9 that is now used in approximately 50,000 classrooms in forty-six states. The program uses hypothetical situations gleaned from literature, family life, peer group predicaments, and classroom deportment in an effort to teach students to evaluate the consequences of their actions and develop alternative solutions.

The Character Education Institute's goals include designing lessons to develop responsible citizens who think before they act and value discipline in their lives to achieve significant goals. CEI understands instruction in character to be as important as academic experience and encourages decisions that enhance moral development.

Each grade-level kit has a set of activity sheets, posters, evaluation instruments, and teacher's guide focusing on values such as:

- Honesty
- Truthfulness
- Helpfulness
- Convictions
- Tolerance
- Use of time and talents
- Citizenship
- Honor
- Generosity
- Kindess
- Courage
- Justice
- Right to be an individual
- Freedom of speech
- Freedom of choice
- Rights to equal opportunity and economic security

Character Trait Lessons

All the character traits are addressed at each grade level, and the complexity of lessons increases appropriately as students mature. The stories and exercises are new every year, and lessons for kindergarten and grades 1-3 are available in Spanish as well as English.

Kindergarten children listen to animal stories in "The Happy Life" series. These stories teach lessons on kindness, fairness, honesty, and generosity. The children are encouraged to figure out the point of the story and

The Role of Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is valued so highly in education today that this one character trait has inspired scores of curricular programs. Many of these assume that self-esteem is the cart that pulls the academic horse. In the October 1987 OSSC Bulletin, *Student Self-Esteem and Academic Success,* William J. Holly writes:

> It should be emphasized that the primary aim of education is not to promote self-esteem. The central concern of schools is to help students excel in the pursuit of those things most worth doing. Students who internalize the best values of our culture will be worthy of esteem, not because they aim at acquiring self-esteem for themselves, but because they value and pursue those things most worth doing and being.

The Character Education Institute's program stresses good character development as the basis for self-esteem. CEI's lessons are designed to develop responsible citizens who think before they act and value discipline in their lives so that they can achieve significant goals. CEI understands instruction in character to be as important as academic experience and encourages decisions that enhance moral development.

then make up their own story that illustrates the same moral. In one story, a boy and a talking turtle are using the swings on a playground. From conversation between the two characters, the children learn about safe places to play, helping each other swing, taking turns, using equipment safely, and so forth. The teacher completes the lesson by asking the children why it is right to take turns and how they feel when they share.

In a second-grade "Right To Be an Individual" lesson, children learn about differences in physical appearance, clothing preferences, personality styles, talents, and positive and negative social qualities. They learn to notice, for example, how people act when they are angry, happy, afraid, or confused. In one exercise, the teacher places several classroom objects on a table (scissors, paste, paper, ruler, paints) and has ten children pick out what they want. The remainder of their classmates observe the interactions that follow and suggest ways for handling problems like noise, selfishness, aggression, and shyness. The experience is a natural introduction to the importance of school and classroom rules and policies.

In a sixth-grade lesson on "Honesty and Truthfulness," the teacher reads the following story to the class and follows the steps described:

Step I

> Shirley went to the store for her mother. After she made her purchases, received her change, and started for home, she realized that she had been given one dollar too much. She stopped and recounted her change. Yes, she had been given a dollar more than she should have received.

Step II

Ask the class what Shirley should do. If none of the students suggests that she take it home and ask her mother or father what she should do, have the class determine why it should or should not be included as a possible alternative.

Step III

Ask the class to discuss how they would feel about each of the following alternatives: (a) returning the dollar to the grocery, (b) keeping the dollar, (c) asking mother or father what to do.

Step IV

Have the students write on a slip of paper which of the three alternatives listed in the preceding step they would choose. Ask them to turn in their slips of paper without writing their names on them. Collect and tally their responses.

Step V

List the tally of the students' responses on the chalkboard.

Step VI

Ask the class if they would change their decision if the store clerk was: (a) someone they didn't know, (b) someone who had been nice to them, (c) someone who was in high school.

Step VII

Encourage students to relate similar incidents that might have happened to them. (Character Education Institute 1991)

A lesson like this avoids explicitly affirming any response that a student might give. It also avoids declaring the "right" answer and thereby inhibiting those children who would initially take the money and run from being honest about their natural inclinations. This would also minimize the children's opportunity to reconsider their initial impulse. Through engaging in interaction with peers, students may eventually begin asking themselves, "What would I want someone to do who found a dollar that belonged to

me?" The story leads the child to the desirable conclusion that honesty is not only the best policy but is also intrinsically good.

The Example of Dumas School

A CBS news report recently described a jolting comparison of the seven top school problems of the 1940s to those of the 1990s. In the forties, teachers complained of students talking out of turn, chewing gum, making noise, running in the halls, cutting in line, violating the dress code, and littering. The problems of the nineties are drastically different—drug abuse, alcohol abuse, pregnancy, suicide, rape, robbery, and assault.

Chicago principal Sylvia Peters inherited the above conditions when she was hired at the Dumas School in 1985. Peters grew tired of collecting knives and guns, counseling pregnant fifth graders, seeing abused children, and dealing with academic apathy and disrespect for authority. She helped install the Character Education Institute's curriculum program. Today Dumas is a model school. Peters says,

> Children build good self-esteem through lessons that have them explore alternatives, determine consequences, and draw conclusions. They learn right from wrong. Lesson activities have students work in small groups where they learn first-hand the need for teamwork, to use self-discipline to achieve goals, and to respect and help others. Respect for rules, laws and authority are presented as essential to any productive society. Responsibility is stressed: responsibility to yourself, responsibility to your family, to your community and to the world. Responsibility builds good self-esteem. (Character Education Institute 1991)

Law in a Free Society Curriculum

The Law in a Free Society (LFS) program was developed over a period of twenty years beginning in 1964 by a committee of legal scholars and elementary and high school teachers. The curriculum units are modeled on the Socratic method of discussion and use simulated activities that help foster analytical and evaluative skills in the students. Legal problems, sociopolitical situations, and interpretations of the U.S. Constitution are examined to determine original intent and to understand the legal process. The goals are as follows:

- increased understanding of the institutions of our constitutional democracy and the fundamental principles and values upon which they were founded

- development of the skills necessary to function as effective and responsible citizens
- enhancement of a willingness to use democratic processes when participating in making decisions and managing conflict (National School Boards Association 1987)

LFS curriculum, designed for grades K-12, is based on eight concepts—authority, justice, responsibility, privacy, participation, freedom, diversity, and property. The material includes casebooks, curriculum guides, lesson plans, sound/color film strips, thirty student books, and a teacher's book. The concept themes of authority, justice, responsibility, and privacy are developed at six instructional levels.

Ethical Decision-Making in the Workplace

This innovative program, initiated by a coalition consisting of Clayton, Missouri, public schools and the Missouri Chamber of Commerce, schedules business leaders to offer day-long workshops in the schools. These workshops attempt to instill ethical principles and create scenarios describing everyday moral dilemmas that confront members of the business community.

Ethical Decision-Making in the Workplace gives students an opportunity to examine the role of ethics in decision-making processes involving profit-making and to explore the application of ethical values to various careers and occupations (Amundson 1991). The program initially asks students to define their goals in life using a list that ranges from altruistic values like "to be a peacemaker" and "to give of myself freely in helping others" to more personal goals like "to be esteemed by others," "to have political power," and "to be secure monetarily." The program directors and business leaders teach students how values are defined and how goals are reached.

As awareness of ethical development is achieved, students begin to consider actual ethical problems in the workplace. Should a newspaper publish the name of a rape victim? Would it be okay for an accountant to falsify a tax return for the firm's biggest client? Given the plethora of national and international ethical scandals from insider trading to corporate spying, it is good for students to see that business and ethics belong together.

Ethical Decision Making in the Workplace is available to schools nationwide through a cooperative effort of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

The Williamsburg Charter Foundation

The Williamsburg Charter Foundation was established in 1988 with the goal of revitalizing the nation's understanding of the religious liberty clauses of the U.S. Constitution. It is endorsed by two former presidents (Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford) and two chief justices of the United States. United States senators, representatives, state governors, and leaders from organized religion, business, and education have signed the document.

The Williamsburg Charter Foundation's curriculum, "Living with Our Deepest Differences," reforges a philosophy of public education that seeks to preserve the integrity of cultural and religious differences. While offering a context for academic freedom, vigorous investigation, and debate, the foundation urges a practical consensus of shared moral values and character education. The emphasis is on unity in the interest of diversity rather than unity at the expense of diversity. Defining its vision of "chartered pluralism," the Williamsburg Charter Foundation (1988) states:

> If we insist on pursuing a religious esperanto, or illusory consensus of beliefs and values, there is a simple reason why the quest will be fruitless. Any parent or child can always find some fundamental difference in values between their family and the school's lowest common denominator. Down that road lies the folly of endless litigation and further flight from public education.

The curriculum is constructed around five major themes of religious liberty reflecting both events in American history and the significance of the religious establishment and freedom of religion clauses of the U.S. Constitution. The organization of the curriculum units involves an overview lesson so that the teacher can acquaint students with key words, definitions, and learning objectives.

A central theme is set out so that children can grasp the "Big Idea." An "Interest Hook," such as a story from the voyage of the Mayflower, provides a link with the central theme and the content of the main historic lesson. The "Historic Lesson" provides information and interpretation of key historic events that illustrate such concepts as political and religious liberty in the colonies. The story of Roger Williams's banishment and his subsequent founding of Rhode Island is a vivid example.

The "Legacy" section traces the effects of the historic events to modern rights and problems. Through these examples, students are challenged to consider the price of liberty. "The Parent Connection" involves homework that draws parents into projects that involve teacher-student-parent interaction. An "Extension" section lists further resources for the teacher so that she can direct students toward special projects. Evaluation procedures allow the teacher to gauge a student's progress in "imaginative reconstruction,

historical empathy and civic responsibility." Finally, there is a section containing master copies of important historical and legal issues, which can be photocopied and distributed. The curriculum comes with video and audio tapes and three notebooks covering upper elementary, junior high, and high school levels.

"Living with Our Deepest Differences" is not a study in comparative religions but rather a primer in issues of religious liberty. Consequently, many religious traditions are studied to give students a better understanding of how such traditions have an impact on the formation of our constitutional and social contract.

Conclusion

Many believe curriculum constructed around universal traits such as honesty, responsibility, compassion, and respect for self and others can be effectively taught in a direct way. Cognitive skills for moral thinking may be fostered through dialogue. However, exercises designed to stimulate moral reasoning and reflection need to be supplemented by task-oriented curricula. Internalization and integration of desirable character traits will be more apt to occur when character education is both taught and modeled.

We should treasure our legacy of storytelling and morally influenced literature, not sanitize it out of existence. In a study of religion and traditional values in public school textbooks, Paul C. Vitz (1986) documented the dearth of values in basal readers in grades 3-6; he noted that the general character of the stories and articles is "the literary equivalent of elevator music." We can critique our cultural history without relegating it to the trash heap. Religious history is an essential element in the human story and should be represented in public school textbooks. Understanding religion and the freedoms associated with it can facilitate character development.

Chapter 4

Implementing Character Education: The Policy Issues

The first question often asked by communities when character education is proposed for the public schools is, "Whose values will be taught?" The concern is understandable. Many parents feel that it is the family's role to instill beliefs and values. Community members often doubt whether consensus on character traits can be reached.

Some teachers, on the other hand, believe that they are already consciously teaching values; they may interpret a specially mandated character education program as both an implied criticism and a burden on their already demanding schedule. Because of these concerns, school districts need to spend adequate time and resources creating a partnership with the community, training teachers, and continually fine-tuning the character education program once it is in place. This chapter looks at the future of character education in Oregon and offers suggestions for designing and implementing a character education program.

Oregon Law—Past, Present, and Future

In Oregon the issue is not *whether* character education deserves the special attention of programs and curriculum, but rather *how* school districts will comply with state law and respond to the State Board of Education policy encouraging schools to develop character education programs. Oregon statute 336.067 instructs public schools to emphasize instruction in ethics and morality (see sidebar) while Oregon Administrative Rule 581-21-200 defines *character education* as "that part of the educational process that develops the traits of the mind and heart that our diverse society shares and holds important. Such traits include, but are not limited to, integrity, respect,

compassion, cooperation, responsibility and citizenship."

Meanwhile, the State Board of Education has been taking steps that may lead to a mandate for the teaching of character education in all the state's schools. A research summary of effective character education programs will be completed and submitted to the state board in June. By October, it is hoped that guidelines and activities for character education will be available to Oregon schools for use in developing programs. Following that, the board may take additional steps to encourage character education in the schools.

Reaction to the board's action has been mixed. Karen Hemmingson, former member of the Oregon School Boards Association, is not sure a new rule was warranted since the existing law already required character education.

Hemmingson believes that the state board might be mandating a program without considering the costs involved. She points out that the need for curriculum development, inservice training, and integration of the new program into the existing curriculum could be costly for the districts. She wonders whether current programs such as Project Reach (a multicultural awareness project that helps students understand other cultures) might already qualify as character education under the law. If the rule passes, Hemmingson believes the best source of feedback from the community on character traits will be site-based teams of parents and teachers.

Oregon Revised Statutes

336.067—Instruction in ethics and morality.

(1) In public schools special emphasis shall be given to instruction in:

(a) Honesty, morality, courtesy, obedience to law, respect for the national flag, the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Oregon, respect for parents and the home, the dignity and necessity of honest labor and other lessons which tend to promote and develop an upright and desirable citizenry.

(b) Respect for all humans, regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, age, sex or handicaps. Acknowledgement of the dignity and worth of individuals and groups and their participative roles in society.

(c) Humane treatment of animals.

(d) The effects of tobacco, alcohol, drugs and controlled substances upon the human system.

(2) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall prepare an outline with suggestions which will best accomplish the purpose of this section, and shall incorporate the outline in the courses of study for all public schools.

Mary Jean Katz, social studies specialist for the Oregon Department of Education, believes that very few teachers and administrators are aware of ORS 336.067 and that a character education mandate will be a new thing to most educators. Katz contends that it will be relatively easy to incorporate components of character education into existing curricula. She also believes that schools that empower their students to participate in decision-making,

involve them in community service, and encourage them to assume responsibility for their learning are well on their way toward educating for character. Before implementing a program, Katz stresses that each district should involve the community in determining which values will be taught.

Recommendations for Implementing Character Education Policies

NSBA's *Building Character in the Public Schools* suggests several steps for launching a successful character education program. However, the order in which the steps are undertaken may vary from district to district depending upon the philosophical and socioeconomic makeup of the community and the current moral climate in the schools.

Identify the Needs and Values of the Community

A collaborative, ongoing relationship with all sectors of the community will ensure future support and bring the school district valuable feedback on program content. Groups to contact include parents, media, law enforcement, local government, ministerial associations, churches, and community service clubs. Surveys, formal hearings, and informal gatherings can all be used to inform and solicit opinions.

The partnership with the community can be maintained through distribution of printed resources and convening ad hoc committees that help refine the program. The joint effort will produce input on character traits, styles of curriculum, and recommendations concerning changes in procedure and evaluation.

The school district should pay attention to the strengths and weaknesses of individual communities. Will consensus on desirable character traits be achieved easily, or does the diversity of a community indicate a more lengthy process? Are there programs in the school and community that are already working well? Can they be tapped for valuable input and supplementary program resources? Religious groups, drug and alcohol recovery programs, and social service clubs may be willing to participate.

Plan a Policy Analysis and Explore Options

Districts seem to generate more enthusiasm by concentrating primarily on positive goals rather than on the multitude of problems that need fixing. Diversity of opinion in the community should not be feared or thought of as an obstacle. By including representatives of diverse groups, a district can eventually achieve grassroots consensus.

Committees need not spend inordinate time on issues that do not engender debate. On the other hand, since a whole new program is being developed, various policy and curriculum options ought to be fully explored before the program is adopted.

Review and Take Action on Policy

Ample time should be allowed for review of character education policies by all interested parties. It is not uncommon for this process to last a year. The proposed policy should be tailored to the needs of the individual district, not simply accepted "as is" from another district.

It is a mistake to publish policy statements without also recommending implementation of appropriate programs and curriculum. Without impending action, policy statements will quickly be forgotten and teachers may become inoculated against the whole process.

Implement and Monitor the Program

An implementation plan should be developed that addresses teacher and staff training, involvement by people in the community, financial considerations, and political considerations. A comprehensive program that features schoolwide and districtwide events and themes is advisable.

The school district should make available written resources throughout the schools and community heralding and endorsing the program. Character initiatives should be afforded the same legitimacy and emphasis as any other academic program. Use of supplementary material not approved by the district administration should be discouraged. It is also important to

> ensure that the district's curricula uses a broad-based approach. The district's character building efforts should include positive role models representing men and women of all age groups from various social and ethnic backgrounds. Also make sure that role models are drawn from past, as well as current, times in order to reinforce for students the idea that efforts to develop and demonstrate good character have a long, proud history. (NSBA)

Evaluate Program's Effectiveness

For school boards and curriculum directors who are used to carrying out an elaborate evaluation plan with any new curriculum, character education may present some initial problems. The AASA report on *Teaching Values and Ethics* concludes:

> As with any educational program, values education activities need to be evaluated. Because the goal of a values program is to change

attitudes, it is more difficult to evaluate than a new math curriculum. Nonetheless, there are some indicators that can be used as part of your evaluation program. They include:

- Number of discipline problems reported
- Number of incidents of vandalism
- Drug and alcohol use
- Number of gang or racial incidents
- Reports from parents
- Surveys of student attitudes
- Reports from teachers on classroom climate

(Amundson 1991)

Devise Guidelines for Controversial Values

Some values or character traits will be associated with religious concepts for some students. However, attention to these controversial issues cannot and should not be avoided. Amundson makes a distinction between teaching values and teaching about values where this conjunction of religion and character is concerned. Whereas some character traits such as honesty and compassion should be taught directly, more controversial values need to be evaluated by the following criteria:

- The study of values in public schools is permitted by the Constitution as long as the subject matter is presented objectively as part of a secular program of education.
- Public schools are not required to delete from the curriculum any subject matter that may offend any religious sensibility.
- Teachers should be sensitive to the beliefs of their students.
- Discussions about values should be conducted with the same academic thoroughness as discussions about any other subject.
- There are developmental differences between elementary and secondary school students. In many value-laden subjects, a discussion that would be appropriate for older students might be inappropriate for younger children.

(Amundson 1991)

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have looked at a range of principles related to policy development. One recurring theme is advocacy of community involvement. Many are optimistic that districtwide consensus can be reached on what constitutes worthwhile human values and that communities will be supportive of reintroducing character education in the schools.

Conclusion

If children have to deal with a life that lacks a predictable moral structure, their chance of becoming a productive adult is compromised. Adults have the role of communicating, modeling, and approving moral behavior. Proponents of character education say that since the time public schools stopped carrying out their age-old mandate to teach students good character values, society has reaped several ill effects.

Some may be willing to allow the moral climate of the schools and society to get much worse rather than employ reasonable and time-honered measures to teach children those behaviors that bring joy, honor, and richness to our lives. However, North Clackamas School District's experience shows that a diverse community can agree on what constitutes basic decency and what facilitates enthusiasm among school children for morally upright actions.

But this is not new knowledge. Most humanistic thinkers and moral philosophers throughout history have recognized the validity of principles like the Golden Rule. All nations at their best have valued the strength and wisdom that develop through moral discipline.

Oregon is moving toward a general legislative rule on the matter of character education. There will be many objections to the practicality of such a measure. People will ask, "Whose values will we teach?" It is my hope that this Bulletin will bring encouragement and practical information to those whose task it is to explain and promote character education programs to school district administrators, teachers, school board members, parents, and members of the community.

Appendix

Where to Obtain Information on Programs and Curriculum

Center for Civic Education/Law in a Free Society
5115 Douglas Fir Road, Suite 1
Calabasas, CA 91302

The Child Development Project
111 Deerwood Place, Suite 165
San Ramon, CA 94583
(415) 838-7270

Character Education Institute
Dimension II Bldg.
8918 Tesoro Dr., Room 220
San Antonio, TX 78217-6253
(512) 829-1727

Duties to the Community
Atlanta Public Schools
Planning & Expanded Services
2960 Forrest Hill Drive S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30315
(404) 766-0551

Ethical Decision Making in the Workplace
Contact: Linda McKay
The Network for Educational Development
6800 Wydown Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63105
(314)727-3686

North Clackamas School District #12
Instructional Media Department
4444 S.E. Lake Rd.
Milwaukie, OR 97222-4799

The Williamsburg Charter Foundation
1250 24th Street N.W. Suite 270
Washington, DC 20037
(202)857-2360

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